

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Slaughter Passes Amendment to Restore \$35 Million to HUD's Office of Lead Control
Funding Will Help Protect Children in Western New York from Dangers of High Blood Lead Levels**

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, recently authored an amendment along with Reps. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY-12) and Lee Terry (R-NE-2) restoring \$35 million in federal funding to the Housing and Urban Development's Office of Lead Hazard Control.

"This is a problem that is national in scope but that hits home hard," Rep. Slaughter said.

"In my district alone, over 2,000 children fall victim to lead poisoning each year, and thousands more are in jeopardy."

"Hundreds of thousands of American children are being hurt every day by the lead in their environment," Rep. Slaughter said. **"The Office of Lead Hazard Control is a big part of the solution to this preventable problem, not a legitimate target**

for budget cuts."

"For us to allow children to suffer from severe yet entirely preventable ailments is simply unjustifiable," she added.

The funding was restored in the FY 07 Transportation-Treasury-HUD-Judiciary-D.C. Appropriations bill recently passed by Congress. It was authored in response to the Administration's proposal to cut \$35 million from the Office of Lead Hazard Control's budget. Rep. Slaughter has for years advocated federal lead abatement programs, and has fought the Administration's attempts to slash the program's funding during House consideration of previous Appropriations measures.

Over 50 percent of the homes in Niagara and Erie Counties were built before 1950, and are likely to contain lead paint. In Erie County, 1,000 children will be found to have unsafe lead levels. A 1.5 million dollar Lead Hazard Control Grant to the City of Buffalo in 2004 has been essential to local efforts to protect these children from lead poisoning.

Studies have included the City of Rochester among the 10 U.S. cities with the worst lead paint

problems. In 2004, 900 children in Monroe County were exposed to lead poisoning.

Nationally, nearly 434,000 U.S. children between 1 and 5 years of age have blood lead levels greater than the level recommended by the Centers for Disease Control. High blood lead levels in children have been linked to asthma, brain damage, mental retardation, hearing loss, hyperactivity, and developmental delays. In extreme cases, exposure to lead has caused seizures, comas, and death in children.

BACKGROUND

HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control provides lead hazard control grants that help cities and states control significant lead hazards in low-income, high-risk properties. In FY 06, the Office of Lead Hazard Control received \$150.48 million in funding - \$16 million less than in FY 05. As a consequence of these cuts, HUD was unable to fund two-thirds of the requests for grants because the need for lead hazard control far outpaces the available resources.

The FY 07 Transportation-Treasury-HUD-Judiciary-D.C. Appropriations bill exacerbates this crisis by slashing funding for the Office of Lead Hazard Control to \$114.84 million. This cut of over \$35 million will significantly jeopardize the progress we have made in eradicating childhood lead poisoning. If we are committed to the national goal of wiping out lead poisoning by 2010, it is critical that we approve this amendment to restore funding to HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control.

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